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SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL-MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

April 1985

Prepared by the Federal Research Division of
the Library of Congress under an interagency agreement

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PREFACE

This chronology is organized by region, country, and date of event. The date of event is sometimes difficult to determine because it varies from source to source. Some sources cite the actual date of the incident whereas others appear to use the official news release dateline. When possible, the actual date of the occurrence is listed.

Analysts contributing to this chronology are Eunice Charles, Nancy Drexler, Robert Handloff, Mary Louise Harmon, Greta Holtz, Kenneth Liberstein, Moses Pinkston, and Rachel Warner.

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East/Central Africa

- Uganda
26/03/85 A four-man delegation from East Germany's Socialist Unity Party (SED) visits Uganda and signs a cooperation agreement with Uganda's ruling party, the Uganda People's Congress (UPC).
- Zambia
20/04/85 Zambia's ruling party, the United National Independence Party (UNIP), announces it will establish permanent vigilante committees from section to ward level to fight crime in the country. The committees will consist of police officers and members of the party youth league. They will be answerable to the Inspector General of the Police, and will have powers to arrest on minor offenses. These vigilante committees seem to be part of President Kenneth Kaunda's effort to rid the country of corruption.
- 24/04/85 President Kaunda announces that he is replacing Prime Minister Nalumino Mundia with former Minister of Education Kebby Musokotwane. He will also replace the UNIP leader and four other Cabinet ministers. This reshuffle is apparently the result of the discovery that the replaced officials were involved in corruption.

East/Central
Africa/Sahel

- Zaire/Chad
26/04/85 According to African diplomatic sources, Zaire has resumed the training of Chadian commandos. A third contingent of about 500 Chadian soldiers arrived at Kota-Koli camp in northern Zaire several weeks ago. Zaire has been hesitant to resume this training because of financial difficulties.

Horn of Africa

- Ethiopia
00/04/85 The Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) in radio broadcasts during April reports repulsing or attacking Ethiopian forces near Tekombia, Nakfa, and Halhal in Eritrea. In a joint action with the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), it reports capturing an Ethiopian base 57 kilometers south of Humera, Gonder Region. The TPLF reports two other major engagements during April. It claims to have attacked 2 Ethiopian battalions, killing 660 government troops and destroying 3 tanks, during a 17-hour battle on 14 April in Welo Region. The TPLF also reports killing 34 Ethiopian troops in a clash on 27 April north of

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Lake Tana. Other TPLF units ambush Ethiopian reinforcements sent from Gonder town, forcing them to retreat. These EPLF and TPLF reports cannot be verified.

04/04/85 The Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF) reports attacking Ethiopian troops about 15 kilometers from Dolo. It also claims to have killed 10 Ethiopian soldiers and destroyed the vehicle they were travelling in during another engagement.

Kenya
22/04/85 The University of Nairobi reopens for the first time since its closure in February following student disturbances. Students are being readmitted on condition that they refrain from organizing or participating in any unauthorized gatherings on campus.

Somalia
25/03/85 The Democratic Front for Somali Salvation (DFSS), an insurgent group that has been waging guerrilla warfare against the Somali regime from Ethiopian territory, claims that a Somali military delegation, headed by President Siad Barre's son-in-law, Brigadier General Abdurahman Abdi Hussein, secretly visited Israel for 2 weeks in February. The DFSS alleges that cooperation agreements were signed between the two countries. This report has not been confirmed by other sources.

25/03/85 The DFSS reports attacking Somali troops 6 times and ambushing 2 military convoys between 25 March and 19 April in Nugaal, Mudug, and Galguduud Regions. These reports cannot be verified.

08/04/85 Somalia and Libya agree to reestablish diplomatic ties at the ambassadorial level. Somalia broke off relations in 1981 when Libya's Qadhafi pledged \$600 million to the DFSS. Somalia issues a statement that relations are being restored for the sake of Arab unity. Morocco mediated the agreement between the two countries.

Sudan
02/04/85 The United States releases \$67 million in previously suspended economic assistance to the Numeiri regime. The resumption of monetary aid is meant to provide the Sudanese

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Government with the necessary funds to satisfy the consumer demand for food and electricity in the short run and preserve the alliance that had been developed between the United States and the Sudan.

- 06/04/85 General Abdul Rahman Swareddahab leads a military coup that ousts former Sudanese President Jafaar Numeiri. Sudanese opposition groups, professionals, and the general public welcome with relief and satisfaction the culmination of Numeiri's 16-year rule. General Swareddahab will lead a transitional military council that will retain control until a viable government, either military, democratic, or an alternative, can be implemented in Khartoum. The new Sudanese Government will face many obstacles, including the famine in Darfur and Kordofan, the consistent flow of Ethiopian refugees into the Sudan, and the lingering southern Sudanese guerrilla war.
- 09/04/85 In the aftermath of the military coup, General Sewarddahab releases 1,000 political prisoners who had been detained by President Numeiri. This initial act by the new Sudanese leader reflects his strong disapproval of the arbitrary repression that was associated with the former government and his willingness to create a more democratic state in Sudan.
- 10/04/85 Colonel John Garang, the leader of the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA), announces that his coalition will refrain from antigovernment tactics for one week to allow the transitional Sudanese Government to consolidate its control over the nation. He rejects General Swareddahab's invitation to commence negotiations in Khartoum regarding the resolution of the southern Sudanese conflict. The SPLA's unyielding position is an attempt to employ military force as a bargaining tool to extract and maximize political and economic concessions from the new military government.

Sahel

Chad

- 02/04/85 President Hissen Habre returns to N'Djamena from a trip to Bamako, Mali, refusing to say if he had met with his ousted predecessor and rival rebel leader, Goukouni Oueddei. Oueddei also leaves Bamako at approximately the same time, returning to northern Chad via Tripoli, Libya. Plans for the meeting deteriorated despite the mediation of Mali's President Moussa Traore, who had succeeded in bringing the

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two together in 1980. Officials from Oueddei's Gouvernement d'Union Nationale de Transition (GUNT) also deny that a meeting had taken place.

Mali

00/04/85 Brigadier Bougari Sangare, former Defense Counsellor, is named Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of Mali. This appointment coincides with the first visit by French Defense Minister Charles Hernu to Mali and the reactivation of the 1977 Franco-Malian military agreement. This military appointment and discussion of new forms of foreign military cooperation are indicative of an increasingly important military role in Mali.

Mauritania

00/04/85 Two important economic portfolios, Finance and Trade and Mines and Industry, are given to military men. Simultaneously, the French military presence, estimated at 80-strong, has been increasing since the December coup. The government appears to be seeking a larger French military presence and increased support among influential officers.

Sahel/West Africa

Chad/Central African
Republic

00/04/85 Central African Republican army troops join with Chadian troops loyal to President Hissen Habre in launching a joint operation against anti-Habre rebels in southern Chad. The operation calls for the Chadian army to chase the rebels, known as Codos, to the border where the CAR army was to intercept them. The operation may not have been successful due to personnel and material weaknesses in the CAR army and because the southern Chadian rebels have many sympathisers in the border areas.

09/04/85 Chadian refugees fleeing into the Central African Republic accuse Chadian Government forces of having committed atrocities against civilians in the south of the country. Reports say that undisciplined troops are massacring villagers and summarily executing local leaders as part of President Hissen Habre's fight against rebels in the south. In some provinces, the rebels have capitulated and have been incorporated into the national army. Efforts to defeat the Codos are marked by severe repression of suspected civilian sympathisers, which have sent large numbers of refugees fleeing across Chad's southern borders.

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Southern Africa

Angola

07/04/85 The provinces of Kwanza Norte and Malanje are without electricity due to sabotage carried out by UNITA guerrillas. A pylon was destroyed in the area of Caxica, 39 kilometers from Dondo, on the 220-kilowatt line transporting energy from Cambambe to N'dalantondo.

Angola/South Africa

17/04/85 South Africa withdraws its last combat troops from Angola following a 2-year occupation. The withdrawal completes a disengagement begun in February 1984 following a major operation in which 2,000 South African troops invaded 100 miles into Angola. General Constand L. Viljoen, Chief of the South African Defense Forces, comments that only 2 platoons, numbering about 60 men, remain in Angola at the joint Angolan-Namibian hydroelectric project in Calueque, about 60 miles north of the border. This presence is in keeping with the terms of an informal security arrangement.

Mozambique

17/04/85 Two MiG-17 jet fighters of the Mozambican Air Force are damaged on the runway of the Maganja da Costa Airfield in Zambezia Province. One pilot was killed and another injured in the incident for which RENAMO claims responsibility. Mozambican authorities deny RENAMO was involved.

Namibia/South Africa

18/04/85 The South African Government announces that it is moving unilaterally to support the establishment of an internal administration for Namibia. The new administration will be empowered to set up a council to draft a proposed independence constitution for the territory. South Africa is to maintain control over defense and foreign affairs under the new arrangement.

South Africa

02/04/85 In downtown Johannesburg, approximately 40 protesters representing the United Democratic Front (UDF) and labor union affiliates demonstrate outside Citibank offices to protest the indifference of the American banking giant and other multinational companies to the plight of South Africa's blacks. The Citibank demonstration is the first of a series intended to pressure American, British, and other foreign companies operating in South Africa to take a more critical stand against apartheid.

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Southern Africa

South Africa

- 03/04/85 Bishop Desmond Tutu leads a procession of 30 clergymen through downtown Johannesburg to police headquarters to protest South Africa's detention without trial of opponents of apartheid and to seek the release of an Anglican priest, Reverend Geoff Moselane, who has been held for over 6 months. Tutu and the other clergymen sing hymns in front of the building while riot police watch and government security agents photograph, videotape, and note the names of the protesters and accompanying newsmen. The clergymen are eventually received by Brigadier Dries van den Heever, the acting Divisional Commander for Johannesburg, who says he will refer their petition to the Minister for Law and Order. Nearly 200 persons are currently detained under security laws that permit them to be held indefinitely in solitary confinement without trial and without being charged with a crime.
- 07/04/85 The Atomic Energy Corporation bans Escom (Electricity Supply Commission) from restoring the Koeberg nuclear power station, closed down in January after faulty piping was discovered, until it is satisfied of the power station's safety. The estimated loss of revenue from the extended shutdown of the power station is likely to exceed 90 million rand before Koeberg is recommissioned.
- 16/04/85 The South African Government announces the repeal of the Mixed Marriages Act which prevents whites from marrying nonwhites, and a section of the Immorality Act which outlaws sex across the color line. The extreme rightwing Herstigte National Party and the Conservative Party are preparing a campaign to oppose the government's decision.
- 23/04/85 South African police detain 3 more leaders of the UDF, bringing the number arrested in recent months to 19. Those arrested under a law that permits indefinite detention without trial include UDF General Secretary Popo Molefe, Publicity Secretary Patrick Lekota, and former Transvaal Provincial Secretary Moses Chikane. Police state that these leaders were arrested in connection with unrest in black townships last August and September. Fifteen other UDF members are in custody on allegations of high treason relating to this unrest.
- 30/04/85 Due to financial problems, the Rand Daily Mail, an English language newspaper which had become one of the harshest

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critics of white minority rule in South Africa, publishes its last edition. South African officials are undoubtedly relieved by the demise of the newspaper, a thorn in the flesh of the ruling National Party and its apartheid policies.

West Africa

Ghana

02/04/85 A delegation headed by Mr. Ebo Tawiah of the Provisional National Defense Council visits the Soviet Union for 2 weeks to discuss issues relating to the World Peace Council meeting to be held in Ghana next month and the International Youth Festival scheduled for Moscow in July 1985.

Ghana/Burkina Faso

01/04/85 Following a 3-day meeting, a joint Ghanaian-Burkinabe commission on bilateral cooperation announces the projected political integration of the two countries. The commission does not specify how the two governments intend to accomplish this beyond suggesting that the union is the natural culmination of a process which began with the coup that brought Burkinabe Head of State Thomas Sankara to power in August 1983, and which has continued with the growing cooperation between the two states.

Ivory Coast

30/04/85 Emmanuel Dioulo, the mayor of Abidjan and possible successor to President Felix Houphouet-Boigny, announces through his lawyer that he will return to Abidjan from Brussels where he had fled. Dioulo allegedly owes an Ivoirian bank \$35 million obtained through his corporation, Cogexim. In the announcement, Dioulo admits owing money to the bank although he disputes the amount. Claiming that the entire affair has been blown out of proportion by his political foes, Dioulo threatens to publish a white paper on 10 May implicating other high-ranking government officials in this and other illegal schemes.

Liberia

01/04/85 Head of State General Samuel K. Doe escapes an assassination attempt in Monrovia when his jeep is met with machine gun fire upon his return to the Executive Mansion shortly after midnight. Doe is unharmed, but two of his bodyguards are seriously injured. Colonel Moses Flanzamaton, Deputy Commander of the Presidential Guard, is arrested, convicted

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and executed for leading the assassination attempt. This latest attempt is the sixth since Doe came to power in 1980.

Nigeria

02/04/85 Nigeria officially requests the extradition of former Transportation Minister Umaru Dikko, a move certain to have repercussions on Nigeria's diplomatic relations with Great Britain. Mr. Dikko is currently living in London where he is seeking political asylum. He was the subject of a major diplomatic standoff between the two Commonwealth nations following a failed attempt last July to abduct and return him to Nigeria to stand trial for corruption.

26/04/85 Fighting breaks out between members of the banned Maitatsine Islamic sect and Nigerian police who try to arrest Yusufu Adamu, the group's local leader in Gombe, Bauchi State. During the two days of fighting, there are over 100 deaths. The Bauchi governor imposes a dawn-to-dusk curfew on Gombe, promising that violators will be shot.

28/04/85 Nigeria's borders, closed for the past year, are opened so that 700,000 undocumented immigrants may comply with a government order to leave the country if they are unable to legalize their status. The borders have been closed to prevent currency smuggling following the currency changeover a year ago. Approximately 300,000 of the immigrants are thought to be Ghanaian, while another 100,000 are thought to be from drought-stricken Niger.

Nigeria/Equatorial
Guinea

02/04/85 Following the recent confrontation between Equatorial Guinea and Nigeria over labor unrest and the shooting of a Nigerian laborer on the island of Bioko, a five-man Nigerian delegation visits Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, to assess relations between the two countries. The visit, under the leadership of Mr. S.O. Ogundele of the African Affairs Ministry, follows the visit of an Equatorial Guinean delegation to Lagos last month.

Togo

03/04/85 Almost 79 percent of Togo's 1.3 million registered voters elect a new Parliament with 57 out of the 77 seats going to newcomers. The poll marks the first time voters are able to choose between several candidates in each constituency. In

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previous elections only a single candidate from the ruling
Party of the Togolese People (RPT) appeared on the ballot.